

If, therefore, Mrs. Wilkie is correct in referring her impression to May 3, this impression did not coincide with the death, but occurred two days later. It is, however, to be observed that Mrs. Wilkie is admittedly uncertain as to the exact date of her impression, and since no contemporary note was made, the date cannot now be fixed. In these circumstances the case cannot be reckoned as a "death-coincidence," but it seems to be clearly shown on the evidence of Mrs. Wilkie herself, her son, Mr. G. B. Wilkie, and Mr. Bromberg, that the experience occurred before Mrs. Wilkie had any normal knowledge of Mr. Plenge's illness and death.

Subsequently, after receiving the proof of this report, Mr. Bromberg wrote to Mrs. Salter as follows:

November 27, 1923.

Since writing to you yesterday Mrs. Wilkie is in my office and states that the feelings that she had and the statements she made to her son positively took place before she received the newspaper containing the obituary of Mr. Plenge. She also distinctly remembers that as soon as she received the paper, and observed the date of the death, she remarked to her son and also came down and told the writer that the obituary showed this death occurred the same evening that she had thought of him and of hearing his voice. . . .

FREDERICK G. BROMBERG.

CONCERNING THE "PRICE-HOPE" CASE.

In April of this year one of our Members, the Rev. C. Drayton Thomas, sent us a detailed criticism of the report of Mr. H. Price's experiment with the Crewe Circle as printed in the *Journal* for May 1922 (p. 171), and further discussed by the Hon. Officers of the Society in the *Journal* for January 1923 (p. 4). In this criticism Mr. Thomas gave reasons why in his opinion the evidence put forward in Mr. Price's report should not be regarded as affording proof that any member of the Crewe Circle had been guilty of fraud on the occasion in question.

Mr. Thomas's statement was examined by the Research Committee of the Society, who discussed it with him at some length, and eventually invited him to make an abstract of

his arguments to be printed in the *Journal*, the original statement being too long for this purpose.

This abstract, as sent to us by Mr. Thomas, we now print, together with a reply on behalf of the Research Committee, written at the request of the Council.

STATEMENT BY THE REV. C. DRAYTON THOMAS.

The following is an abstract of the report upon this case prepared by a Member of the Society for consideration by the Research Committee.

The report itself being considered too lengthy for inclusion in the *Journal*, the Committee suggested that an abstract should be placed before our readers.

1. The main questions are :

- (a) Whether the packet which Price handed to Hope contained the plates marked by the Imperial Plate Company.
- (b) Whether the plates exposed in the camera by Hope came out of the said packet.

2. As to (a) : In the first place the neglect to take proper precautions for the continuous security of the packet from the time it left the control of the Imperial Plate Co. till the time of the seance ; and secondly, the omission, when the coverings were opened, to notice whether the seals were effective and intact, weaken the evidence as to the identity of the plates so much that the point is not proved in the judicial sense.

3. As to (b) : Mr. Price alleges that the slide containing plates taken from the said packet was changed by Mr. Hope for another slide containing other plates. He says that he marked the slide into which the plates were put, that he noticed a suspicious movement on Hope's part which suggested the substitution of another slide, that this suspicion was confirmed when he failed to find on the slide which Hope gave to him the second time the marks made on the original slide, and that suspicion was converted to certainty when the development showed that the plates were not those which had been in the packet. This appears to be the meaning of his various statements. He has not said in his published evidence that he observed the results of his attempt to mark

the slide; and the presumption that the performance then was equal to the demonstration before the S.P.R. Annual Meeting in January 1923 is weakened by the consideration that, to elude Hope's observation and hearing, he must have acted more covertly and silently than at the meeting. He certainly did not take the precaution of inventing some excuse to show the marks to Seymour and thus obtain corroborative testimony. It is possible, therefore, that, when he received back from Hope what purported to be the same slide, he found no marks on it because his apparatus had failed to work properly.

4. A subsidiary question touching the respective theories of both sides concerning (a) and (b) relates to the source of the two anonymous parcels sent to the S.P.R. The same person apparently sent both (see letter accompanying the second parcel). The sender's object was to prejudice Hope's case. To have obtained possession of the plate forming one of the Imperial Co.'s original set, which plate was in parcel No. 1, the sender must have been either somebody attached to the British College for Psychic Science who bore ill will to Hope, as the letter and papers enclosed in the parcels imply, or somebody connected with the experiment. There is no evidence that Hope had an enemy at the College, and nothing to show that such an enemy, had there been one, could have found out at so early a stage of the proceedings that the S.P.R. was concerned in this experiment. If the sender was an enemy, he was extraordinarily fortunate in selecting this particular undeveloped plate when rummaging through Hope's stock. If he were one of the experimenters, he must have had access to the packet and obtained the plate before the seance, taking advantage of the laxity of the custody.

5. There were two glass positives in the second parcel representing a Chinese Magician, which are at least as likely to have been in the possession of somebody connected with the Magic Circle as to have been found among Hope's stock. There is no evidence to connect them with any "extra" ever obtained by Hope.

6. The red celluloid disc contained in parcel No. 2 was apparently intended to suggest a device for imitating the

stencil dots used for the X-ray outline of the Imperial Plate Co.'s trademark, the figure of a crowned lion. Whether it was made by Hope, or by someone else who wished to convey the impression that Hope had so made it, is the point at issue. The correspondence between the pattern of these dots on the red disc and two sections of the crowned lion is too close to be due to coincidence.

One of these sections is the hind leg, as on the plate enclosed in anonymous parcel No. 1, which belonged to the original set prepared for Mr. Price. Nobody could have known what was on this plate who had not seen it *after its development*, and because it was not developed until it reached the S.P.R. only a person in touch with the S.P.R. could have obtained the knowledge; and Hope is thus absolved from the suspicion of making those dots on the disc which correspond with the lion's hind leg.

Other dots on this red disc represent the crowned head of the lion. An examination of the complete set of plates shows this to have been the section of the figure which was borne by the plate still missing, that is to say, one of the plates said to have been given by Mr. Price to Mr. Hope for the experiment and for which other plates were substituted either then or at an earlier stage (see paragraphs 2 and 3 above). Whoever had the plate with the hind leg doubtless had also the plate marked with the crowned head; the same person must have copied from both plates to make the pattern which is on the red disc, and this person cannot have been Hope.

(To follow this argument in detail the reader requires the photographic illustrations, and the text, embodied in the report of which this is an abstract.)

7. Finally, there is the mistaken remark in parcel No. 2 about Madam getting suspicious, which may more plausibly be attributed to one of the experimenters than to anyone connected with the College.

8. The general circumstances, therefore, and the internal evidence furnished by the contents of the parcels are favourable to the theory of their source having been the Magic Circle rather than the College.

9. In the *S.P.R. Journal* for May 1922, page 283, it was stated that :

“ It can, we think, hardly be denied that Mr. William Hope has been found guilty of deliberately substituting his own plates for those of a sitter.”

On an *ex parte* statement of the case this impression was natural; but now that the other side has been heard and fresh facts have come to light it is inconceivable that any impartial Court would convict him on the evidence.

REPLY TO MR. DRAYTON THOMAS'S STATEMENT.

We give below a reply *seriatim* to the arguments put forward by Mr. Thomas. It should be stated that this reply has been made as brief as possible. If any of our Members wish to enquire further into the case, they can see at the Rooms of the Society a copy of Mr. Thomas's original detailed criticism, and our Research Officer, Mr. E. J. Dingwall, or the Hon. Editor, Mrs. Salter, will be glad to discuss with them any points upon which they are not satisfied.

The numbers given below in round brackets refer to the numbered sections of Mr. Thomas's statement.

(2) With regard to the suggestion that the packet of plates taken by Mr. Price to the sitting cannot be proved to be the identical packet containing all the plates prepared and marked by the Imperial Dry Plate Co., we are entirely satisfied that the packet of plates handed over to Mr. Price and Mr. Seymour immediately before the sitting was the identical packet committed to the Society's charge. As to what occurred before this packet came into the Society's possession we are admittedly dependent on Mr. Price's statement. On this point the Hon. Officers of the Society have already stated (*Jour.* Jan. 1923, p. 5) that after careful enquiry they can find no evidence whatever that the packet had been tampered with by any of the people through whose hands it had passed. No fresh evidence has been brought to the Society's notice which could lead us to reconsider this conclusion, and the assumption that proper precautions were not taken for the continuous security

of the packet during its detention in the Society's keeping is gratuitous and unfounded.

(3) With regard to the suggestion that Mr. Price may have failed to mark the slide into which his own plates were put, we would point out that while it is, of course, possible that Mr. Price's apparatus failed to make the expected marks, there is absolutely no ground for supposing this to have been the case, in view of the fact that his own statements are clear and consistent; he is experienced in such matters; he knew exactly what he had to do and what to look for afterwards. When, therefore, he asserts positively that he marked one slide in a certain way and that the slide eventually put into the camera was *not* marked, his assertions afford strong presumptive evidence that a change of slides had in fact been effected. This evidence is reinforced by the absence of any marks on the two plates developed after the sitting.

As to the circumstance of Mr. Price having failed to draw Mr. Seymour's attention to the marked slide, he has already explained at the Annual Meeting of the Society in January last that he was actuated by a desire not to arouse any suspicion of his proceedings on the part of Mr. Hope or Mrs. Buxton.

(4) With regard to the two anonymous packets it has not so far been possible—although in this matter we have done our best—to obtain any clear evidence as to the identity of the sender. As to Mr. Thomas's statement that "the sender was extraordinarily fortunate in selecting this particular undeveloped plate [one of the original marked plates] when rummaging through Hope's stock," we cannot do better than repeat the statement already made in the *Journal* for January 1923, p. 8.

It is not difficult to suppose that the sender of the anonymous packet was aware of Mr. Price's experiment; for, according to Mr. Price's account, two marked plates were left at the College in a dark slide into which they were loaded. Only one of them has been returned. The other may well have been developed at the College by Mr. Hope himself, who would thus become aware of its being marked, and that, therefore, Mr. Price must have discovered the substitution practised on him.

As to the suggestion that no one at the British College for Psychic Science "could have found out at so early a stage of the proceedings that the S.P.R. was concerned in the experiment," it should be noted that Mr. Price was known to be a Member of the Society, and that in March 1922 the following note appeared in the *Journal*:

The Research Officer would be glad if those Members and Associates of the Society who have experiments in view with Mr. Hope, Mrs. Deane, or Mr. Vearncombe, would communicate with him before arranging their sittings.

It is rather surprising that Mr. Thomas should assert positively that the object of the sender of the two anonymous packets "was to prejudice Hope's case," seeing that in Sections 5 and 6 of his statement he himself argues that the contents of the second packet go far to prove Hope's innocence!

(5) It is doubtless true that the representation of a Chinese Magician found upon one of the glass positives in the second anonymous packet might "have been in the possession of somebody connected with the Magic Circle." But would such a person have selected it as a likely method of casting suspicion upon Mr. Hope? Would he not have been more likely to reproduce upon this positive the kind of "extra" which is typical of Hope's phenomena? It is more easily arguable that someone of Mr. Hope's circle might have chosen the Magician in order to cast suspicion on someone connected with the Magic Circle.

(6) We now come to the only point in Mr. Thomas's statement which brings forward anything in the way of new evidence. Mr. Thomas contends that the marks upon the red celluloid disc contained in the second anonymous packet are in fact copied from that portion of the Imperial Dry Plate Co.'s Trade Mark (the hind leg of the lion) which was reproduced upon the undeveloped plate sent to the Society in the first anonymous packet and developed on behalf of the Society by the London Stereoscopic Society. No one, he says, "could have known what was on this plate who had not seen it *after its development*," and such a person must have been "in touch with the S.P.R."

Assuming for the moment that Mr. Thomas is correct in his statement that part of the marks on the celluloid disc have been copied from the plate sent undeveloped to the S.P.R., may we not ask why a person "in touch with the S.P.R." and desirous to incriminate Hope should have deliberately chosen to copy just that part of the Trade Mark concerning which knowledge could not easily be attributed to Hope or any of his associates? According to Mr. Thomas's own statement the marks on the celluloid disc were in part copied from the plate which was (and still is) missing and might be presumed to be in Hope's possession. Why did the sender of the second anonymous packet not confine himself to copying the marks on that missing plate, thereby carrying the trail of suspicion straight back to Hope?

The "Chinese Magician" argument suggests a surprising lack of resource in Mr. Thomas's shadowy villain; the argument now under consideration surely implies a perverse ineptitude which passes all belief!

The real answer, as we believe, to Mr. Thomas's argument is that there is no good reason for supposing that the marks on the celluloid disc are "copied" from any part of the Trade Mark. For the details of Mr. Thomas's argument (together with the illustrations he sent us in support of it) we must refer our readers to his full statement which, as we have already said, can be seen at the Society's Rooms. Put briefly the arguments against Mr. Thomas are as follows:

(a) The alleged resemblance between a part of the pattern on the celluloid disc and the hind leg of the lion (on the undeveloped plate) can only be made apparent by quite arbitrarily dividing the pattern on the celluloid disc into two parts at a point where there is no evidence of such a division; that is to say, a group of dots which appear to form a continuous curve has to be counted as belonging partly to one section and partly to another.

(b) The correspondence in number between the dots forming a certain part of the pattern on the celluloid disc and the dots forming the lion's hind leg (18 dots in each case, see Mr. Thomas's detailed statement) is only reached by arbitrarily determining both as regards the celluloid disc and as

regards the Trade Mark at what point in the pattern we are to begin and end the counting.

We maintain that the objections brought forward under (a) and (b) weaken Mr. Thomas's argument so seriously that only an absolutely exact correspondence between the selected portion of the celluloid disc and the hind leg of the lion would have enabled Mr. Thomas to prove his point.

As a matter of fact there is no exact correspondence; there is only a general resemblance in outline, which does not seem at all beyond what chance might produce.

With regard to the resemblance detected by Mr. Thomas between the pattern on another part of the celluloid disc and the crowned head of the lion, after subtracting the dots required by Mr. Thomas to form the lion's hind leg, we are left with four large dots—too few in number and too vague in outline for any conclusion to be drawn from them—and a double row of small dots set close together, which have no counterpart on any portion of the Trade Mark.

What we suggest is that the person who made the celluloid disc had probably seen that part of the Trade Mark which would appear on the missing plate (left at the College according to Mr. Price's statement and never traced since); this unknown person may or may not have recognised the pattern on the plate as forming part of the Imperial Co.'s Trade Mark—on this point there is no clear evidence; he did not "copy" any part of the Trade Mark, but he pricked out a pattern of dots sufficiently like the marks on the plate to suggest imitation.

As to the motive by which the sender of the two anonymous packets was actuated, no positive assertions can be made so long as he remains unidentified. We should like, however, to suggest that if his motive was to obscure the issue and draw a red herring across the original trail, the amount of time and trouble expended by Mr. Thomas and others in a discussion of these packets is evidence of his success.

(7) We cannot follow Mr. Thomas's reasoning. It does not appear to us that the wording of the remark included in the second anonymous packet affords any clear evidence one way or the other as to the source of the packets.

(8) For the reasons given above we dissent from Mr. Thomas's conclusion that "the contents of the parcels are favourable to the theory of their source having been the Magic Circle rather than the College," though the general evidence is insufficient to justify us in suggesting the implication of any particular person. Mr. Thomas, we note, does not repeat the suggestion that has been made in other quarters that some person at the Society's Offices tampered with the packet of plates before the experiment. It appears scarcely necessary to refer to this suggestion otherwise than by pointing out the fact that the wrapper, upon the condition of which it is based, was preserved and handed over to the British College by our Research Officer, an action absurdly inconsistent with any such presumed guilt.

(9) After a careful consideration of all the evidence brought to our notice we are unable to find any indication of *mala fides* either on the part of Mr. Price or on the part of any of those associated with him in his experiment, and we see no reason to doubt that the report of this experiment, as printed in the *Journal* for May 1922, was substantially true.

A year and seven months have now elapsed since the printing of this report. During that interval the case has been thoroughly discussed at the Annual General Meeting of the Society in January 1923, and we have tried to give fair consideration to such arguments as have been put forward for rejecting Mr. Price's evidence. We do not feel that any useful purpose can be served by prolonging the discussion, so far as concerns the evidence already before us. If any new evidence of importance should be brought to our notice, Members of the Society may be sure that it will receive our most careful attention.

NOTE BY SIR W. F. BARRETT, F.R.S.

I regret that in the very brief report of the Annual General Meeting of the Society, published in our *Journal* for February last, there was not space for the excellent speech made by Sir Oliver Lodge on Sir A. Conan Doyle's motion, nor for my letter to the chairman on the same topic.

The following extract from my letter expresses the view I hold on the whole question :

"Whilst I have nothing to do with the investigation in dispute, let me say that no one who knows our Research Officer, Mr. Dingwall, can doubt for a moment that his zeal and ability are coupled with a perfectly straightforward and open mind. At the same time, the way in which the Hope inquiry has been conducted is, I think, a matter for regret. Our Research Officer should have had the investigation entirely in his own hands, or withdrawn from it altogether. As it is, not only Mr. Price, but two other persons, Mr. Seymour and Mr. Moger—neither of whom are connected with the S.P.R.—were more or less mixed up in the enquiry. I have not the least doubt they are all perfectly honourable gentlemen, but under these circumstances, in view of the unsatisfactory results obtained, it is far better, in my opinion, not to waste time over further discussion and recrimination, but to go back to Mr. Pugh's generous offer contained in the July [1922] *Journal*, and begin the investigation *de novo*. Might I beg my friend Sir Arthur Conan Doyle to read the four liberal conditions stipulated by Mr. Pugh, accepted by the S.P.R.—and, I believe also, by Mr. Hope, on condition that he was told about the anonymous packet, which was done, I understand.

"We all know how much the *mental* attitude of the investigator affects the medium, and may inhibit all supernormal phenomena. Hence it is undesirable that anyone who has already committed himself adversely to Hope should take part in this further enquiry."

CONCERNING TWO NEW GROUPS FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH.

We have been informed by one of our Members, Herr Regierungsrat Ubald Tartaruga, that, upon his initiative, a "Parapsychic Institute" has been established in Vienna. This Institute, which has for its object "systematic and impartial enquiry into psychical phenomena," consists in a Committee of Direction and Associates.

It proposes to hold weekly meetings every Saturday evening at the Neue Wiener Handelsakademie.

We have also been informed by Monsieur Ed. Wietrich of the foundation in Paris of the Société d'Études Télépathiques (Cercle

S. Hôtel des Sociétés Savantes, 28 Rue Serpente, Paris 6). Monsieur Wietrich tells us that the Society would be glad to be put in touch with possible percipients with a view to arranging experiments.

We are glad to note these indications of increased interest in psychical research in other countries, and we wish both these Societies all success.

CORRESPONDENCE.

CONCERNING PROFESSOR RICHEL'S *TRAITÉ DE MÉTAPHYSIQUE* AND THE MEDIUM SAMBOR.

To the Editor of the JOURNAL OF THE S.P.R.

November 16, 1923.

DEAR MADAM,—I see that in his magnificent work *Traité de Métapsychique* Professor Ch. Richet more than once refers to my experiments with Sambor, but says that all these experiments—and even “everything Sambor did”—must be held to be “absolutely suspicious”—and this: because I (P. P. S.) did subsequently ascertain that one of my friends, who was also one of the sitters (in some of the seances, be it added), proved to be Sambor’s “accomplice.”

Professor Richet will permit me to state that in this form what he affirms is *incorrect*.¹

I never obtained one item of evidence that the “friend” referred to (who died in 1915 or 1916) played the part of an accomplice of the famous Russian medium. The evidence we subsequently (about eight years after S.’s death) *did* obtain was this: X. was detected in *not* holding a medium’s hand when he ought to have controlled it. As to this there is no doubt. And as it was X. who controlled at some of my best sittings with Sambor (notably at two simply marvellous ones held in St. Petersburg in May 1902—my last ones with that medium), I felt bound to consider that these seances must be held to be “null and void”: a tremendous pity since they were so good. But I repeat that we had no direct evidence that X. did allow *Sambor* to cheat either at the sittings in question or at any other. In particular the

¹ See my article in *S.P.R. Proceedings*, Vol. XXV., 1911, pp. 413–417.